# The Triumph of the Cross

*"Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place."* 2 Corinthians 2:14

The precious phrase, *"in Christ,"* is found over eighty times in the New Testament to describe our glorious spiritual inheritance in Jesus Christ. God has made us joint-heirs *in Christ* (Romans 8:17). He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places *in Christ* (Ephesians 1:3). He has predestined us to spiritually reign *in Christ* (Romans 5:17). According to the Bible, this should be our normal Christian experience *in Christ*.

But first, how do we get *"in Christ?"* There is nothing we could possibly do to put ourselves *in Christ*. This is a miraculous work only God Himself could do. The moment we received Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and were born again of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-7), God placed us *in Christ* (1 Corinthians 1:30). The Bible says that we were spiritually immersed *into Christ*. This is the true spiritual significance of baptism, which means immersion in the Greek (*baptisma*). "For all of you who were baptized *(immersed) into Christ* have clothed yourselves with Christ (Galatians 3:27)." A brother in Christ once used the analogy of inserting a piece of paper into a book to describe this event. Then whatever happened to the book also happened to the paper in the book. If the book was immersed under water, the paper was also immersed under water. This is what spiritually happened to us when we were immersed *into Christ*.

Christ's redemption (His death, burial and resurrection) was an eternal event in the spiritual realm. Because we have been immersed into union with Christ (1 Corinthians 6:17), we have been spiritually incorporated into every aspect of Christ's redemption. Our union with Christ starts at the cross when we were immersed into His death. "Or do you not know that all of us who

have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? (Romans 6:3)." When Christ died, our old sinful nature died *in Christ* and was buried (removed) *in Christ* (Romans 6:6; Colossians 2:11). When Christ was made alive and raised from the dead, we were made spiritually alive and raised *in Christ* (Romans 6:4-11; Ephesians 2:5-6). Since Christ has been seated in the heavenly places, we are also seated in the heavenly places *in Christ* (Ephesians 2:6). Because Christ has triumphed over the world through the cross, we have also triumphed over the world *in Christ* (Romans 8:37; 2 Corinthians 2:14).

What does the Bible mean to triumph *in Christ?* It means that only *in Christ* are we able to overcome the power of Satan and sin. By His death on the cross, Christ triumphed over sin (John 1:29; Romans 8:1-2). Because we are *in Christ*, we have also overcome sin (Romans 6:11; 1 John 3:9; 5:4-5). When Christ died, God freed us from the power of sin by including us in His Son's death (see Romans 6:3-7). Before we died *in Christ*, Satan had power over our sinful nature (Ephesians 2:2). However, since our sinful nature has been crucified and removed by Christ's death (Romans 6:6), we have been freed from sin (Romans 6:7) so that sin no longer has power over us (Romans 6:14). Thus, by His death on the cross, Jesus Christ disarmed the power of the devil to make us sin (Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8). "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Colossians 2:15)." Because Christ has triumphed through the cross, all spiritual powers and authorities are subject to Him (Ephesians 1:20-22; 1 Peter 3:22).

Since we are *in Christ*, we have also overcome the devil, the enemy (1 John 4:4; 5:18-19). When Jesus sent His disciples out to preach the gospel, He gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal the sick (Luke 9:1-2). He told them, "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall injure you

(Luke 10:19)." Because we are *in Christ*, we also have authority over the power of the enemy.

How do we triumph *in Christ*? We overcome the same way we received forgiveness of sins. We believe what God says is true and act on it. If we are *in Christ*, we believe that God has forgiven us because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross (Ephesians 1:7). In the same manner, if we are *in Christ*, we believe that God has made us overcomers because of Christ's triumph on the cross (1 John 5:4-5). Christ has already done everything for us. Christ, who lives in us, has become our Savior and He has also become our Overcomer. Salvation did not depend on our self-effort. We receive God's grace, Christ's forgiveness of sins, because of His sacrifice on the cross. In the same way, overcoming does not depend on our self-effort. We receive God's grace, Christ's overcoming life, because of His triumph on the cross. This leads to good works born from faith in Christ's completed work on the cross. There is no other way to bear true fruit.

If we are still trying to overcome sin and Satan by our own ability, we will be defeated. If overcoming depended on us, we would never make it. However, since we have died *in Christ*, we no longer have a sinful nature. Our sinful nature has been crucified and removed *in Christ*; therefore, we do not have to keep trying harder to overcome. Instead, we can depend on the power of the cross of Christ by which we have been crucified to the world and the world has been crucified to us (Galatians 6:14). In our natural strength, we cannot overcome the devil and sin, but now we can look with confidence to our Lord Jesus Christ who overcomes through us. What is victory? Victory is fixing our eyes by faith on Jesus Christ who has already triumphed on the cross (Hebrews 12:2)! God has immersed us in Christ's victory! This is the truth that sets us free!

*"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* 1 Corinthians 15:57

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